TL 4532

Wednesday, September 18, 1991

CANADA

House of Commons Debates

VOLUME 132 • NUMBER 30 • 3rd SESSION • 34th PARLIAMENT

Oral Questions

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EAST TIMOR

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

As the minister knows, the Government of Canada was quick to support sovereign self-determination for the Baltics, to condemn and go to war over the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, yet our government has consistently supported Indonesia in its illegal conquest and brutal oppression of East Timor.

I want to ask the minister, whether in spite of Canada's substantial bilateral aid and billion dollar private investment in Indonesia, will Canada now act to support United Nations initiatives to free East Timor from Indonesia?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, Canada considers that Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor is a fact, recognizing that there has never been any history of independence or self-determination or self-government in that territory.

We do not condone the manner of incorporation and we deplore and condemn the loss of life that occurred, but we very much support the unsponsored dialogue between Portugal and Indonesia as the most promising means to reach an understanding in that very unfortunate and unhappy circumstance.